

way to deal with these cleanups. The waste needs to be stored somewhere. The President has indicated that Yucca Mountain is not one of the options for disposal of nuclear waste.

I was disappointed to hear that. However, we must remember that Yucca Mountain remains the law of the land and that the administration does not have the ability to unilaterally terminate the project. In order to eliminate Yucca Mountain, Congress would have to amend the Nuclear Waste Policy Act, which set a deadline for the Federal Government to begin disposing of used fuel. However, more than a decade later, we still have not settled on a policy for how to accomplish this, and we have sunk nearly \$10 billion into Yucca Mountain. That is a huge sum of money, even for the amounts we talk about today. Not to mention that it is the most studied geology on the planet.

I do not think we should abandon this project simply because of political pressure. Regardless of what this administration says, we will continue to face the problem of nuclear waste management. We must have a successful plan to dispose of nuclear waste, whether it is through direct disposal or recycling. I believe we need to go forward with recycling and I have offered legislation to do just that. Either way, we are going to need a site, but if we recycle this waste, it would be less toxic. It would be radioactive for far fewer years than would be the case if it were not recycled and perhaps would then be more palatable to those who object to the site.

Perhaps an answer, which to me makes sense, is to move the Nuclear Waste Fund off budget to a dedicated account so that the money will be used for what it was intended. Currently, it is being spent in other places and being replaced with an IOU. Why should utilities pay money into a fund when they are not getting any benefits that they were promised? It just lead us into liability and lawsuits, some of which are already being lost.

I believe nuclear power has proven to be exceedingly safe in America. Not one American has lost their life operating a nuclear powerplant.

The Three Mile Island situation, which caused so much fear and concern in America, did not result in even one person in the studies afterwards to have been sick. But the plants today, and the new ones we will build, will be even safer. They will be set up in such a way that even without power they would automatically shut themselves down through gravity flow into the reactor core. It is a new and safer design. They can be built in mass production quantities, resulting in lower costs per plant, and perfecting the technology and construction techniques that should result in reducing costs. It would allow the components to be produced in larger numbers, reducing costs, and help the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, because of the uniform nature of these plants, to regulate them even more effectively.

Mr. President, I thank the Presiding Officer and would say again, nuclear power produces about 20 percent of our electricity today. It emits no CO<sub>2</sub> or other global warming gases into the atmosphere. It is cost effective, it is all American, and it does not require us to expend large amounts of American wealth to foreign countries in order to maintain our energy supply. Nuclear power is the right thing to do, and I hope we will continue to work on it because I believe the country is ready to move in that direction.

I thank the Chair and yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BEGICH). The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. DORGAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that no further amendments be in order; that the substitute amendment, as amended, be agreed to and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table; that the bill, as amended, be read a third time and the Senate then proceed to vote on passage of the bill; that upon passage, the Senate insist on its amendment, request a conference with the House on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses, and that the Chair be authorized to appoint conferees on the part of the Senate; provided further that if a budget point of order is raised against the substitute amendment and the point of order is not waived, then it be in order for another substitute amendment to be offered, minus the offending provisions but including any amendments which had been agreed to previously, and that then no further amendments be in order; that the new substitute amendment, as amended, be agreed to with the remaining provisions beyond the adoption of the substitute amendment remaining in effect; further, that the subcommittee plus Senator INOUE be appointed as conferees.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection? Without objection, it is so ordered.

The majority leader.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 1498

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 126, S. 1498, the Surface Transportation Extension Act of 2009; that a Boxer substitute amendment, which is at the desk, be agreed to; the bill, as amended, be read a third time and passed; and the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. MCCONNELL. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I understand my friend has objected. I would

not belabor the point, but the Environment and Public Works Committee worked very hard. This is an 18-month extension of the highway bill. It is all paid for. But we understand and we will continue working on this and we will see what we can come up with at a later time.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that tomorrow, Thursday, July 30, at a time to be determined by the majority leader, following consultation with the Republican leader, the Senate proceed to H.R. 3357; and that when the bill is considered, it be considered under the following limitations: That there be general debate of 20 minutes equally divided and controlled in the usual form, with the time under the control of the leaders or their designees; that the only amendments in order be the following and that debate time on each amendment be limited to 60 minutes equally divided and controlled in the usual form; that no other amendments be in order; that upon disposition of the listed amendments, the bill, as amended, if amended, be read a third time, and the Senate then proceed to vote on passage of the bill: Ensign amendment regarding unemployment benefits, Bond amendment regarding SAFETEA-LU, the Vitter amendment regarding the highway trust fund, the DeMint amendment with the offset on the housing substitute.

Further, that upon disposition of H.R. 3357, the Senate proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 105, H.R. 2997, the Agricultural, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration and Related Agencies programs; that once the bill is reported, Senator KOHL be recognized to offer a substitute amendment, which is the text of the Senate committee-reported bill, S. 1406; further, that once this agreement is entered, the aforementioned amendments be filed and printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Mr. MCCONNELL. Reserving the right to object, could the majority leader give me an indication of when we might turn to this matter tomorrow?

Mr. REID. I indicated to our floor staffs that we will do our very best to get it here as early as we can tomorrow afternoon.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Early tomorrow afternoon?

Mr. REID. As early as we can get it over here. If we are fortunate, we may get it here in the morning, but we will get it here as early as we can. I would say to my friend, the bill is passed, so it is just clerical stuff. It shouldn't be difficult at all to get it over here.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Under the previous order, the substitute amendment, No. 1813, as amended, is agreed to, and the motion to reconsider is laid upon the table.